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LD 2224

My name is Whitney Miller, and I am a sophomore at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. I am strongly in support of LD.2238, An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases, and LD.2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System.

Gun violence in the United States is not just a problem – it is a public health epidemic. It is affecting everyone that you know and love, and you have the power to put measures in place that will begin to end it. Personally, I have never been more scared for my life than during the October 25th shooting in Lewiston. Stuck in lockdown, hiding behind a bookshelf in the library, I called my parents to make sure they knew I loved them because I was terrified that I would not make it to the next morning. And currently, there is absolutely nothing preventing this shooting from happening again. Without legislative change, students are scared to walk across a crowded college campus out of fear that someone will begin shooting. Without legislative change, parents across the state remain afraid that their children may not come home from school each day. Without legislative change, Mainers remain afraid of going to crowded public places, bowling alleys, and bars, like those where the October 25th shooting occurred. We should not be scared of our own home and our own communities. We should be able to be proud of our state, not reduced to a mass shooting statistic.

Today, you have the power to make Mainers feel safe again. It is imperative that we act now to protect our communities from future violent shootings, so that the Lewiston mass shooting never happens again. In fact, had the state been equipped with more comprehensive gun safety laws that ensure people are purchasing guns for the right reasons in the right mental states, the shooting likely never would have occurred. This is the moment for the legislature to act courageously for the mental health and safety of all Mainers. The legislation that you are voting upon today, LD.2238 and LD.2224, are the perfect places to begin in creating a society that does not live in fear. I urge you to vote to pass these bills in session to protect Maine citizens from gun violence.